

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for browsing and retrieving pictures in a picture database via a graphical user interface (GUI), said method comprising the steps of:

capturing a digital image;

receiving position information in the form of metadata corresponding to a geographical location where said digital image is captured;

storing digital images and associated metadata in said picture database;

generating a main display level having a first geographical metaphor with picture icons, each said picture icon corresponding to a group of pictures in said picture database captured at a specific location in said first geographical metaphor; and

generating at least a second display level linked to said main display level, said second display level having a second geographical metaphor with greater geographical specificity than said first geographical metaphor with picture icons, each said picture icon corresponding to a group of pictures in said picture database captured at a specific location in said second geographical metaphor.

2. The method in Claim 1, wherein said second display level is generated via activating a picture icon in said main display level.

3. The method in Claim 1, wherein the relative size of said picture icons is proportional to the number of pictures captured at the locations on the geographical metaphor where said picture icons are placed.

4. The method in Claim 1, wherein the geographic specificity of each display level is configurable by a user.

5. The method in Claim 1, wherein said metadata further comprises temporal capture information.

6. The method in Claim 5, wherein the temporal specificity of each display level is configurable by a user.

7. The method in Claim 1, further comprising the step of:
generating an additional display level comprising thumbnail representations of the pictures corresponding to icons in said second display level.

8. The method in Claim 1, further comprising the step of:
generating a third display level linked to said second display level, said third display level having a third geographical metaphor with greater geographical specificity than said second geographical metaphor with picture icons, each said picture icon corresponding to a group of pictures in said picture database captured at a specific location in said third geographical metaphor.

9. The method in Claim 8, further comprising the step of:
generating a fourth display level linked to said third display level, said fourth display level having a fourth geographical metaphor with greater geographical specificity than said third geographical metaphor with picture icons, each said picture icon corresponding to a group of pictures in said picture database captured at a specific location in said fourth geographical metaphor.

10. The method in Claim 9, further comprising the step of:
generating a fifth display level linked to said fourth display level, said fifth display level having a fifth geographical metaphor with greater geographical specificity than said fourth geographical metaphor with picture icons, each said picture icon corresponding to a group of pictures in said picture database captured at a specific location in said fifth geographical metaphor.

11. The method in Claim 1, wherein said first geographical metaphor is a world map.

12. The method in Claim 1, wherein said first geographical metaphor is a world map, and said second geographical metaphor is a continent map.

13. The method in Claim 1, wherein said first geographical metaphor is a world map, and said second geographical metaphor is a country map.

14. The method in Claim 8, wherein said first geographical metaphor is a world map, said second geographical metaphor is a continent/country map, and said third geographical metaphor is a state/territory map.

15. The method in Claim 9, wherein said first geographical metaphor is a world map, said second geographical metaphor is a continent/country map, said third geographical metaphor is a state/territory map, and said fourth geographical metaphor is a city/town map.

16. A graphical user interface (GUI) system adapted for browsing and retrieving pictures in a picture database, said system comprising:

memory adapted to store digital images and associated metadata corresponding to capture location in said picture database;

a main display level generator adapted to generate a main display level having a first geographical metaphor with picture icons, each said picture icon corresponding to a group of pictures in said picture database captured at a specific location in said first geographical metaphor; and

a second display generator adapted to generate a second display level linked to said main display level, said second display level having a second geographical metaphor with greater geographical specificity than said first geographical metaphor with picture icons, each said picture icon corresponding to a group of pictures in said picture database captured at a specific location in said second geographical metaphor.

17. The system in Claim 16, wherein said second display generator is triggered via activating a picture icon in said main display level.

18. The system in Claim 16, wherein the relative size of said picture icons is proportional to the number of pictures captured at the locations on the geographical metaphor where said picture icons are placed.

19. The system in Claim 16, wherein the geographic specificity of each display level is configurable by a user.

20. The system in Claim 16, wherein said metadata further comprises temporal capture information.

21. The system in Claim 20, wherein the temporal specificity of each display level is configurable by a user.

22. The system in Claim 16, further comprising:
an additional display generator adapted to generate an additional display level comprising thumbnail representations of the pictures corresponding to icons in said second display level.

23. The system in Claim 16, further comprising:
a third display generator adapted to generate a third display level linked to said second display level, said third display level having a third geographical metaphor with greater geographical specificity than said second geographical metaphor with picture icons, each said picture icon corresponding to a group of pictures in said picture database captured at a specific location in said third geographical metaphor.

24. The system in Claim 23, further comprising:
a fourth display generator adapted to generate a fourth display level linked to said third display level, said fourth display level having a fourth geographical

metaphor with greater geographical specificity than said third geographical metaphor with picture icons, each said picture icon corresponding to a group of pictures in said picture database captured at a specific location in said fourth geographical metaphor.

25. The system in Claim 24, further comprising:

a fifth display generator adapted to generate a fifth display level linked to said fourth display level, said fifth display level having a fifth geographical metaphor with greater geographical specificity than said fourth geographical metaphor with picture icons, each said picture icon corresponding to a group of pictures in said picture database captured at a specific location in said fifth geographical metaphor.

26. The system in Claim 16, wherein said first geographical metaphor is a world map.

27. The system in Claim 16, wherein said first geographical metaphor is a world map, and said second geographical metaphor is a continent map.

28. The system in Claim 16, wherein said first geographical metaphor is a world map, and said second geographical metaphor is a country map.

29. The system in Claim 23, wherein said first geographical metaphor is a world map, said second geographical metaphor is a continent/country map, and said third geographical metaphor is a state/territory map.

30. The system in Claim 24, wherein said first geographical metaphor is a world map, said second geographical metaphor is a continent/country map, said third geographical metaphor is a state/territory map, and said fourth geographical metaphor is a city/town map.